

N^o 12

A ✓
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
SONS of the CLERGY,
AT THEIR
ANNIVERSARY-MEETING
IN THE
Cathedral Church of St PAUL,
Feb. 22. 1738-9.

BY
EDWARD BANYER, D. D. K
Afternoon-P preacher to the HONOURABLE SOCIETY
of GRAYS-INN.

⊕
L O N D O N :

Printed for WILLIAM PARKER, at the King's-Head
in St. Paul's Church-yard. MDCCXXXIX.

112

SEERSON



Presented before the

SONS of the CLERGY

AT THEIR

ANNUAL MEETING

IN THE

Cathedral Church of St Paul

Feb. 22. 1838.

BY

EDWARD BAWYER, D.D.

Attorney-at-Law to the Honourable Society
of GRAYSON.

LONDON:

Printed for WILLIAM PARKER, at the King's Head
in St. Paul's Church-yard. MCCCXXXIX.

TO THE
STEWARDS

For the late FEAST of the

SONS of the CLERGY;

Cavendish Nevile, <i>M. A.</i>	Edward Smith, <i>Esq;</i>
Paul Batcheller, <i>sen. M. A.</i>	Thomas Potter, <i>Esq;</i>
Thomas Bernard, <i>M. A.</i>	George Brodrepp, <i>Esq;</i>
Richard Eyre, <i>M. A.</i>	John Thorpe, <i>Esq;</i>
Sir Robert Hildyard, <i>Bar.</i>	Edmund Chishull, <i>Gent.</i>
William Bedford, <i>M. D.</i>	Edward Hillersdon, <i>Gent.</i>

THIS
SERMON,

Preach'd and Printed at their Request, is, with
due Respect, inscrib'd

By their most Obedient

Humble Servant,

E. BANYER.

TO THE
STEWARDS

For the late Feast of the

SONS of the CLERGY

Overbury, M.A. Edward Smith, Esq.
Nottingham, M.A. Thomas Cook, Esq.
St. Paul's, M.A. George Bantock, Esq.
St. Paul's, M.A. Thomas E. E.
St. Paul's, M.A. Edward Chubb, Esq.
St. Paul's, M.A. Edward Hillier, Esq.

THIS

SERMON

Preach'd and Printed at their Request, in
due Respect, inscrib'd

By their most Obedient

Humble Servant,

H. BANYER.

NUMBERS ~~xi~~ 29.

And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets.

WE find in this Chapter *Moses* greatly afflicted with the Murmuring and Discontent of the People in the Wilderness. He earnestly beseeches God that he may no longer be obliged *alone* to sustain the weighty Government of that People. God is pleased, in answer to his Request, to order him to gather together *to the Tabernacle seventy Men of the Elders*, whom he promises to endue with the same spiritual Gifts and Abilities, which he had supplied him withal, as well to enable them duly to discharge so important an Administration, as to be a Sign to others that he had called them to that Employment.

Accordingly we are told, that *The Lord came down in a Cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it to the seventy Elders: And it came to pass that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied—But there remained two of the Men in the Camp whom the Spirit rested upon—and they prophesied in the Camp **; which is observed to be a greater thing than if they had prophesied in the Tabernacle; from whence they were probably detained by God's especial Providence, that the Miracle might be the more evident to all the People.

B

And

* Ver. 25; 26.

*And there ran a young Man, and told Moses, and said Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the Camp, and Joshua the Son of Nun, the Servant of Moses, one of his young Men, answered and said, My Lord Moses forbid them *.*

This he said not so much from any Apprehensions that he seems to have been under of the ill Consequences of Schism and Sedition, which might have been occasioned by their Absence from the Tabernacle, as that he feared, lest by their acting independently and separately from Moses, his Master's Power and Authority might be diminished. But we find the meekest of Men of a quite contrary Temper.

And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets.

Which Words are not to be taken in an absolute Sense. For as all are not, cannot be Rulers, so *all are not*, cannot be *Prophets*. Each of them must have their respective Correlatives.

Moses had entertained too high Sentiments of Infinite Wisdom not to be satisfied with all its Dispensations. He was no ways conceited or puffed up with those extraordinary Instances of Divine Favour, conferred upon himself in particular, well knowing how little he had to be proud of, and *who it was that made him to differ from another*. For the Apostle argues, 1 Cor. iv. 7. *He that hath received it, how can he glory as if he had not received it?* No. So far was he from thinking that he had any Reason to be envious against others of like Attainments, that, had it been possible, it would have been Matter of great Satisfaction to him, *that all the Lord's People were Prophets*.

This Answer of Moses was doubtless † “an high Demonstration of that most excellent Spirit within him, “which had nothing in it of Envy, Pride, or Vainglory: “For he sought not himself in the least, but purely the
“ Glory

* Ver. 27, 28.

† Bishop Patrick in Loc.

“ Glory of God, and the Good of his People. Which
 “ admirable Temper of Mind St. *James*, from hence, com-
 “ mends to all Christians, when he saith, *Chap. iv. 5.*
 “ *Do ye think that the Scripture saith in vain, the Spirit*
 “ *that dwelleth in us lusteth to Envy? But he giveth more*
 “ *Grace:*” A Temper of Mind more particularly suitable
 to those among them who are distinguished as spiritual
 Persons; who when they seriously consider, that how great
 soever the Powers may be, that they are endowed with, or
 the Stations they are called to, they are *Gifts*, or Trusts
 reposed in them by God, cannot but affectionately wish,
 that all those who are committed to their Charge were
altogether as they are in all spiritual Advantages; *that all*
the Lord's People were Prophets.

I propose, in the ensuing Discourse, to take a short View
 both of the Importance and Difficulty of the Pastoral or
 Prophetic Office, and to lay before you some Considerations,
 tending to remove that Load of Obloquy, with which it has
 been oppressed; concluding with a Reflection or two,
 suitable to the Occasion of this Day's Solemnity.

And first we have in View the *Importance* of the Pasto-
 ral or Prophetic Office, for the various Purposes of Religion;
 for Government, for Instruction, and for the Dispensation
 of all the Divine Ordinances, in Opposition to those, who
 either allow no Power whatever, but in the Civil Magi-
 strate, or contend that all Christians, without Distinction,
 are both Priests and Prophets.

With Regard to Government, it may suffice to observe,
 That as the Civil Society is called a Body, by a known
 Metaphor, taken from the Natural Body, the Parts of
 which are severally assistant to each other, and receive
 Warmth and Vigour from one common Principle; so there
 is a Spiritual Society, the Members whereof, how re-
 mote soever from each other, in their Civil Interests and
 Concerns, are yet so conjoined as to make but *one Body*

under *one Head*—That the Powers, they claim, are of a different Nature, and designed for quite different Ends.—That they are so constituted, that they can never interrupt each other, while they run in their proper Channels; for the Spiritual Powers, being applicable only to Spiritual Purposes, can never clash or interfere with those other Powers, which are equally ordained of God.—That the Civil Society is to be conducted, under the ordinary Methods of Providence, according to the particular Laws and Customs of each State or Kingdom; whereas the Spiritual Society, being instituted by Christ himself, can admit of no Alteration, from any Authority less than that of its supreme Head and Lawgiver, who was graciously pleased, by himself and his Apostles, to lay down such a Plan of Government for his visible Church, as, if regularly pursued, would effectually promote and preserve Peace and Order.

As to Instruction, that more particular Business of the Prophet, its Necessity cannot fairly be questioned by any, that consider the State of Christianity, and take human Nature as in Fact they find it, and not as in bare Theory, they may chuse to have it.

For though the Wish, as it is commonly called, of *Moses* is more than compleated, the People of God being now favoured with fuller Discoveries of the Divine Will, and better acquainted with the Meaning of the several Prophecies, than even the Prophets of old appear to have been; though the Scriptures, which are able to make Men *wise unto Salvation*, are of the freest Access to all; yet if we reflect upon the gross Ignorance of Multitudes, even in this Sun-shine of the Gospel, proceeding from a wretched Defect of Education in some, from Prejudice and Inattention in others, or from the many necessary worldly Avocations in a third Sort, we shall soon perceive that there are very few, who have not need of particular Instruction,
and

and that with Authority, as well as Argument and Persuasion, to keep them steady in the Practice of the plainest Duties.

Indeed as there is no Man so knowing, as to be incapable of Increase in Christian Knowledge; so all Men, more or less, want to have their Affections raised from low mean Pursuits, to Objects worthy of their rational Nature; and the great End of Preaching itself, the ordinary Method of Instruction, is not more to inform the Understanding than to awaken the Attention, and occasion a serious Application of the awful Truths of Religion to the Consciences of Mankind. *Wherefore, says St. Peter, I will not be negligent to put you always in Remembrance of these Things, though ye know them, and be established in the present Truth* *.

Hence not only the Necessity of teaching in general, but the *Importance* of a stated Order of Men, well qualified by their Profession *for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness*, who while the rest of the World are taken up with it's Cares or Vanities, should be appropriated to remind them of a future State, and to guide their Steps in the Way that leads to Life. All Helps, all Restraints, are requisite, either by proper Encouragements, to excite the glorious Hopes of Salvation, or by *the Terrors of the Lord to persuade Men*.

But what most indisputably determines the Importance of the Prophetic Office, for this as well as other Purposes of Religion, is it's being settled and ordained of God. He appointed *the Apostles and Prophets* to continue that Spiritual Building, of which they were the *Foundation*, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone*, by fitting out others to succeed them *to the End of the World*; who, when they teach and instruct the People, execute the Prophetic

* 2 Pet. i. 12.

phetic Office, performed by our Lord himself, of preaching the Gospel.

Great Reason then have all Men to be thankful to the Divine Wisdom for the standing Provision made for the Edification of the Church of Christ; *that it should not be tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine.* And therefore tho' the Preacher, who, by the Order of Providence is *set over them*, should be, as to human Accomplishments, inferior to some of the Laity, yet as the Grace of God is able to operate, very powerfully, by seemingly weak Means; so they have more Reason to expect it in *his* Appointment, than in other Ways of their own devising. It is the Divine Grace which can alone effectually enlighten the Mind, and convince the Will; and this God, in the Use of his Ordinances, is frequently pleased to bestow in such a Manner, as to evidence our Faith, not to stand in the *Wisdom of Men*.

It ought to be looked upon as a singular Blessing to this Church, for which she can never sufficiently express her Gratitude to God, that he has been pleased to raise up a Succession of so many able and learned Men *rightly to divide the Word of Truth* in the most rational and persuasive Method. Learning and Abilities are by all Means to be encouraged. There can be no Care too great in the Choice of Persons proper to be entrusted with the sacred Ministry of the Church. But there is something still more important than either their Learning or Abilities, *viz.* Their teaching with Authority from God. Let us view a more ordinary Person in this Light, and he will be hardly found to say any thing unworthy Notice and Regard.

Permit me just to observe, that if, according to an Opinion too prevailing, Abilities merely human be all that is wanting to qualify the Teacher, it is highly expedient that a Power should be lodged somewhere of enquiring into these Abilities; lest the Presumption of confident Men should make the Scriptures themselves no longer a complete

plete Rule of Faith and Manners. For it will not surely be thought necessary, to the more effectual Establishment of Truth, that every one should be at Liberty to propagate Error. Besides,

A promiscuous Allowance of Teachers will not only unavoidably destroy the Peace of the Church, which depends upon the Behaviour of those who are Members of it, but the Civil Community is like to enjoy but little Security, if the private Opinion of every Person, concerning his own Fitness, may give him a Title to so considerable a Branch of the Prophetic Office.

This is a Truth, that they can be no Strangers to, who are at all read in the History of Mankind, and which, were it proper to dwell on the ungrateful Subject, it were easy to confirm by Instances home to the Purpose.

But to proceed. Preaching or declaring the Duties of Religion, though sometimes taken for the whole Office of the Ministry, is but a Part of the Commission of the Pastoral or Prophetic Order. They are Persons appointed by God to under-mediate the Concerns of the second Covenant. They are empowered to offer up the united Petitions of his People, to implore the Divine Blessing, with full Assurance of being heard, and to seal the Terms of Pardon and Forgiveness by visible Signs of an inward and invisible Grace. *They are ordained for Men in Things pertaining to God: an Honour, saith the Author to the Hebrews, which no Man taketh to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* From whence he teaches us to infer, that whoever thus *taketh to himself* the sacred Office, can discharge no Part of it with due Authority and Success.

The Objection is not altogether so strong against those who assume the Province only of preaching the Word of God; it having in itself, as a Means of Instruction, a natural
Tendency

8 A SERMON preach'd before

Tendency to improve the Hearer. There is no doubt but that private Christians may lawfully admonish, and instruct each other; nay, that it is the Duty of every one, to the utmost of their Power, to propagate *saving Knowledge*, and by Precept as well as Example, to promote the Interests of Religion and Virtue. But private Instruction is one thing, and preaching in the public Congregation another. And indeed if there was no other Reason why the latter should not be promiscuously allowed, this single one would be sufficient, that there are an Order of Men, separated by God for that Purpose.

Though therefore it must be a high Piece of Presumption in any Person, unauthorized, to assume the Province of Preaching, which is not to be considered as merely a Means of Instruction, but as an authoritative Declaration of the Terms of Divine Acceptance, yet unwarranted, to dispense the positive Ordinances, to administer those holy Rites which are *generally necessary to Salvation*, is more daringly profane; inasmuch as the unhallowed Administrator uses a Means, which cannot of itself operate to any End at all. What Allowances are to be made for any necessary Defect in the Ministry, is no Part of our present Consideration; ordinarily we are assured, that the Blessing of God upon his own Institutions, must be confined to the Conditions of his own prescribing.

They, then, enjoy no imaginary Distinction, who are so essential to the Constitution of the visible Church; for as long as there is a *Body of Christians to be edified, and Saints to be perfected*, so long the Work of the Ministry will be *important*, and so long the several Ranks of the Prophetic Order will be necessary for the due Execution of it.

The Difficulty of which, I proceed in the second Place briefly to consider.

And

And here we may well apply, though in a Sense somewhat different, the Interrogation of *Moses* to the Son of *Nun*, *Why enviest thou for my Sake?* to all those, who esteem it an Employment of ordinary Undertaking.

He who thinks so meanly of the Pastoral Care, would, by a nearer Survey of the several Duties and Obligations of it's Ministers, be quickly convinced, that they are not permitted to eat the Bread of Idleness, or to indulge themselves in Ease and Indolence.

They are to be *accounted of as Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, and it is required in Stewards, that they be found *faithful*.

They are *Shepherds* of Christ's Flock, not only to feed them in green Pastures, and lead them to the Waters of Comfort, but to defend them against all Disturbers of the spiritual Fold; to seek that which was lost, to bring again that which was driven away, as they will answer it, one Day, to the great Shepherd of the Sheep.

They are *Watchmen* obliged, in the Language of the Prophet, to watch upon the high Towers, that they may give timely Notice to their Charge below, to flee from the approaching Danger, lest Blood should be required at the Watchman's Hand.

They are *Husbandmen*, who have put their Hands to the Plough, and bound themselves by the most sacred Ties, to gain an Increase from their respective Farms; to cultivate the good Seed, lest the Enemy come, and mingle it with Tares.

To these great Ends they will always have in View their solemn Promise, *faithfully to minister to the Doctrine and Discipline of Christ*; they will humbly aspire to be like their Great Master, *Prophets mighty both in Word and Deed*, and to have, as the High-Priest of old, their *Urim* and their *Thummim*; a thorough Knowledge of the revealed Counsels of the Divine Will, and all that exemplary Holiness,

10 A SERMON preach'd before

ness, which is necessary to make their Endeavours more effectual, for the Salvation of Mankind.

And who, that remembers that he is under these Obligations, will be elated with a Province, which cannot be duly entered upon without serious Concern, and must always administer Matter of the deepest Humility?

For who is sufficient for these Things? To minister to the Welfare of Souls! What Skill is requisite for so arduous an Undertaking? What Care and Thoughtfulness necessary to prevent the Miscarriage of the least of those *for whom Christ died?*

To be Leaders in the Christian Warfare.—To be shining Examples to a degenerate Age.—To be wise both for themselves and others, and to let their Zeal, well accompanied with Knowledge, break forth like Fire on the Altar, by opposing every dangerous Error with a Diligence so unwearied, a Resolution so firm, a Disposition of Mind so brave, as to be willing to part from all that is dear to them, rather than betray those glorious Truths they preach and profess.—A Work so great and difficult, which can never be supported without the Assistance of God's holy Spirit, ought out of common Generosity, as well as a due Regard to the Divine Appointment, to prevail with the Christian Laity, *to pray without ceasing*, for a Blessing thereupon, and to be ready, on all Occasions, to ease the Weight, and forward the Success of a Ministration, instituted by God for *their* Comfort and Advantage.

* *Obey them*, says the Apostle, *that have the Rule over you, and submit yourselves: For they watch for your Souls, as they that must give Account; that they may do it with Joy and not with Grief:* “† Sweeten and allay the irksome
“ Labour of your Teachers, by performing to them all
“ Offices

* Heb. xiii. 17.

† Mulcete eum Laborem omnibus Obsequiis & Officiis. ut cum Alacritate, potius quam Dolore, fungantur munere satis gravi, etiamsi à vobis nihil triste accedat. Grot.

“ Offices of Respect and Love, that they may with Alacrity, and not with Grief, discharge a Function, of itself a sufficient Burthen, without any Addition of Sorrow from you.” And now

In the Third Place, give me leave humbly, to endeavour at least, to vindicate the sacred Function, from that Load of Obloquy with which it hath been bespattered at Noon-Day. I am aware of the Invidiousness of the Attempt, on a less favourable Occasion; and yet, why should that be blameable in one, which is confessedly allowed to all other Orders and Degrees of Men whatsoever? Not from the Nature of the Office, which is most honourable in itself, as well as of the highest Importance to the Christian World.

That I may not enlarge upon the Esteem in which the Prophetic Order hath been held, in all Ages and Nations, nor produce many Instances to shew, that *Priests of all Religions* have, in this Respect, been in a Manner *the same*; it is evident to all, who are acquainted with the holy Scriptures, that, under the Law, their Authority and Power were proportioned to the Greatness of the Blessings, conveyed by their Ministration to the People. Though when the Apostle makes the Comparison, how far doth the Evangelical exceed the Legal Ministry? * *If the Ministration of Death, written and engraven in Stones, was glorious, so that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the Face of Moses, for the Glory of his Countenance, which Glory was to be done away, how shall not the Ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?* The Titles every where given in Scripture to the Ministers of the Gospel-Dispensation, are designed to guard them from Reproach, and to command Honour and Respect.

C 2

What

What shall we say then to some among us, who would be thought, and I would willingly hope are, Christians, who forget themselves so far as to ridicule, on all Occasions, the Persons of the Clergy, and by exposing their Weakness and Infirmities do more Harm to the Interests of Religion, than all it's avowed Eemies?

The Pretences, they are pleased to make, in Justification of such unkind Behaviour, are, I trust, built upon slender Foundations: I shall mention but one or two.

One usual Pretence is Pride, a Vice, to which of all others, Human Nature, in it's present Corruption, seems most disposed. It is that Vice, which does more *easily beset us*, and which will find a Way to the otherwise well-guarded Passages of the Heart. It must be acknowledged withal, that it can never hope for less Excuse than in those, who are so particularly obliged to follow a Pattern of the most amazing Humility.

Be it however remembred, that Flattery, and the little Arts of Address are so very common, that he is usually accounted proud, who cannot bring himself to comply with them: That they will always be liable to this Imputation, who do not readily fall into the Measures of others, who are desirous of *keeping themselves unspotted from the World*, of preserving a true Sense of the Dignity of their Character, and of avoiding that dangerous Familiarity, which is the genuine Parent of Contempt.

The other Pretences I shall mention, for that Envy and Ill-will, which are so plentifully poured upon the Order, are their Ambition and Avarice, their temporising and *seeking themselves*, to the great Scandal of their holy Calling.

This is a Charge of a most grievous Nature, and if there be any Truth in it, sadly to be lamented. To see those whom it is reasonable to suppose under stronger and more lively Impressions of another World, than the rest of
 3 Mankind,

Mankind, taken up with temporal Views, or descend to mean and unworthy Compliances, is a Disgrace not only to Religion, but to Humanity itself. But *though all are not Israel that are of Israel*, I am persuaded that these Objections, like many others, are, in general, a mere Artifice made use of by ill designing Men, whose Behaviour, were there not the least Ground for the Reflection, would be still the same.

Let us see how it fared with the Prophet *Moses*, who withstood as great and shining a Temptation as can well be conceived. Though from an exposed Infant; he became the adopted Son of an hereditary Princess, and was Heir apparent to a Crown, yet *when he was come to Years, he refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter; choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season; esteeming the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of Egypt*. Here sure was a sufficient Indication of a generous disinterested Mind; but no sooner was he honoured with a Message from God, than we find him every where maligned and opposed by Noise and Faction.

The Time would fail us to tell of all the Prophets under the Law, of whom the World was not worthy; nor need we take Pains to shew, that they were seldom free from ill Usage, meerly for being Prophets, since the Ministers of the Gospel were no better received in those Times, when it was preached in the highest Evidence and Demonstration of the Spirit. I think, says St Paul, that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to Death. For we are made a Spectacle unto the World, and to Angels and to Men. We are Fools for Christ's Sake, — we are weak — we are despised — we are made as the Filth of the World, and the Off-scouring of all Things unto this Day.

God

14 A S E R M O N preach'd before

God hereby designed to convince all those who were capable of Conviction, that his Servants *fought not themselves*, that their only View was the Propagation of those Truths, which with so much Danger they published to the World.

But this was not to be the hard Condition of the Ministers of Christ in succeeding Ages, when *Kings should become their nursing Fathers, and Queens their nursing Mothers*. The Church, even amidst the most terrible Conflicts of Persecution, had frequent Respites, but when the World grew Christian, it immediately obtained the Support of human Laws, and the greatest Princes thought it their Honour to advance it's Wealth and Prosperity. In which prosperous Condition, through different Degrees of Success and Splendor, it is, blessed be God, derived down to us at this Day, The Church of Christ, primitive in it's Doctrine, Worship, and Government, is here established by Law, and may it be established, in Spite of Envy, Schism, and Infidelity, till they, with every Heresy, be subdued, *and God shall be all in all*.

But we are to consider that *the Church of Christ on Earth*, is still a Church *Militant*, and however favoured by the higher Powers, always has and will be subject to the Opposition and Affronts of unreasonable Men. The *Disciples* therefore should not be surprized, when they meet with the same Usage as *their Lord*, who, at the very Time that he was preaching the *glad Tidings* of Salvation, and laying down such Rules of Life, as manifestly tended to raise the human Nature to it's highest Pitch of Perfection, was treated with the utmost Scorn and Indignity.

If then from the *first* to the *second Moses*, from the goodly *Fellowship of the Prophets*, to the glorious Company of the *Apostles*, they so persecuted them that went before; and if there have been in all Ages those who have sat in the Seat of the Scorn, it is little to be wondered at, in an Age

so fruitful in Prodigies, that they who are deservedly the Esteem of the Protestant World abroad, should be without equal *Honour in their own Country*.

But why? What Cause can be productive of so sad an Effect?

Were not in a Manner all the first Reformers of the Prophetic Order? all the better Part of the Reformation, which consisted in recovering these Nations from a long Midnight of Ignorance and Superstition, was performed by that Order of Men, who added to the *noble Army of Martyrs*, by *witnessing a good Confession*; and *resisting even unto Blood*. Have they since kept the Scriptures from the People, or *shunned to reveal to them the whole Council of God*? Do they claim any temporal Jurisdiction, inconsistent with the Laws of their Country? Do they expect any other Maintenance, than what they have a Right to demand by those Laws?

Were they suspected of being, as heretofore, under a separate Engagement; were they not so *divided in Jacob*, as to be *Bone of the same Bone, and Flesh of the same Flesh*, and allied to the Body of the Laity, by the nearest Ties of Nature and Affinity, there might be some plausible Pretence for this Usage. But as they are in all Respects, as much interested in the Honour and Welfare of their Country, and have been on all Occasions as ready to promote it as any other Set of Men whatsoever, there can be no other Reason assigned, but that it is owing to a Contempt of Religion in general, and proceeds from the restless Endeavours of the great Enemy of Mankind, to blast the Credit and Influence of the Pastors, the more effectually to destroy their Flock.

But it is Time to apply ourselves, more immediately to the Occasion of this present Meeting: an Occasion at once the Glory and the Shame of the Reformation.

We

We are met in the Behalf of Youth and Innocence, fallen from the Advantages of Paternal Care, or the Hopes of a liberal Education, into Misery and Want. We are met in the Behalf of the Orphans of the Prophets, a Relation which cannot but engage every serious Christian, to view them with an Eye of Concern, as the Descendants of Men, not only useful in their Generation, but who have been employed in the most important Service, that rational Beings can possibly be employed in, the Glory of God and the eternal Welfare of Man.

They who look upon the sacred Function, as not only useless in itself, but as destructive both of the Civil and Religious Rights of Mankind (for such, it seems, there are in the World) will think themselves under no Obligation, to contribute to the good Work before us, will never be induced, for the sake of the Parents, to shew any Instance of Kindness to their Posterity.

I hope therefore I have, in the preceding Discourse, been so far from mispending the Time allotted me, that I have as effectually confirmed your wonted Favour to those Objects, whose Proxy I here stand, as by treating more particularly upon the great Duty of Charity. For all the Topics of Persuasion which have so often, on this Occasion, in the most advantageous Manner been laid before you, would be of little Weight, unless you are convinced that the Parties pretending to, are indeed entitled to your Generosity and Compassion. Charity, that greatest of the three, is no longer a Virtue, it is in it's happiest Application but Weakness and Infirmary, when it bears not a proper Regard to the Merit of the Object.

But here you are assured of the Approbation both of God and Man in the Discharge of a Duty to those who plead, I had almost said, the Pleas of Justice in their respective Claims. Their Claims are the Claims of the Prophets, who tho' they were worthy of their Hire and had
had

had a Right to *partake of that Altar* at which they so painfully and willingly attended, have yet been so sparingly requited, as to leave their Children Beggars.

The very Occasion of this venerable Appearance, ought for ever to put to Silence the unreasonable Cry of worldly Interest, with which the Profession has been so often insulted. They, who account it a meer Trade, may from hence find it a very sorry one; and that had the Ministers of Christ nothing to encourage them, but temporal Expectations, they might well be dissatisfied with their Education and Employment; there being hardly the meanest Fraternity among us, but what receive a much better Return from their respective Occupations, than the inferior Clergy; whose Revenues, if we consider their necessary and unavoidable Expences, make it Matter of Admiration (it ought indeed to be esteemed highly Providential) that so few of their Families in Comparison, should be in Want of our charitable Aid and Assistance.

It is then surely just, that what has been denied to the Parent, should, in some Measure, be made up to his distressed Offspring, that they who inherit the Poverty, which was the undeserved Portion of the Prophet, should be relieved for the Prophet's sake.

What may reasonably be presumed from others, is much more to be expected from you, *the Children of the Prophets and of the Covenant which God made with your Fathers*. Though others should endeavour to lessen the Dignity of the Profession, allow it no Title to Honour or Maintenance, and be wholly unmoved at the Misfortunes of your Brethren, you will think yourself obliged, the more obliged, to contribute to their Support, and the placing them in such Circumstances of Life, as may, by the Blessing of God, enable them, in their Generation, to do the same Credit to their Descent and Extraction, as you yourselves now do.

D

Give

18 A SERMON preach'd before, &c.

Give me Leave only to add to those several Arguments, which will naturally arise in the Minds of all, who are *come together in the House of God as Friends*, and to an Annual Solemnity, instituted for the Exercise of the Offices of Charity, that those Restraints of Mortmain, which have of late Years been laid upon Dispositions by Will, make it the more expedient for us *to do good*, while we *have Opportunity, to the Household of Faith*: We are hereby more particularly reminded to promote the Design of this Feast of Love; that a Design, which has hitherto so prosperously succeeded, may go on *to increase with the Increase of God*.

We can never assemble on this Occasion, without Hearts full of Gratitude, for the several Instances of Royal Favour, by which this Corporation has been graced and distinguished; for the many liberal and truly noble Benefactions, (be they preserved in the Register of Eternity!) which have so greatly tended to support the Cause of the Widow and the Fatherless, and for all the gracious Dispensations towards the Sons of the Prophetic Order, by which the most High has been pleased to honour his own Inheritance.

May a Day *thus generously appointed* continue, as long as the sad Occasion continues, to be not more a Day of Reproach to the Enemies of *our Sion*, than a Day of Boasting and Triumph to all those, who *pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*: And may each revolving Year bring together the Great and the Good, thus to testify their sincere Love unto *Israel*, and to give Thanks unto the Name of the Lord. For ever blessed be his Name who hath Pleasure in the Prosperity of his Servants. Blessed be the Name of his Majesty for ever: And let all the People say, Amen.

F I N I S.

E R R A T U M.

Page. 2. Lin. 25. after for add as.

*BOOKS printed for WILLIAM PARKER, at the
King's-Head in St Paul's Church-Yard.*

THE *Cambridge* Concordance to the Holy Scriptures: Together with the Books of *Apocrypha*; and the various Readings both of Texts and Margin, in a more exact Method than has hitherto been extant. The Fifth Edition, very accurately corrected.

The Works of the most Reverend Dr *John Sharp*, late Lord Archbishop of *York*, containing all his Grace's Sermons and Discourses; with a Preface, giving an Account of the said Discourses. Compleat in Seven Volumes, 8vo.

N. B. The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Volumes may be had separate.

Fifteen Sermons, preached at the Royal Chapel of *Whitehall*. By *George Carleton*, M. A. Sub-Dean of his Majesty's Chapels Royal.

An Answer to the Dissenters Pleas for Separation: Or, an Abridgment of the *London Cases*. Wherein the Substance of those Books is digested into one short and plain Discourse. The Sixth Edition. By *Thomas Bennet*, D. D. late Vicar of *St Giles's Cripplegate*.

The Scripture Doctrine of Christ's Divinity: or, The adorable Nature, voluntary Subjection, and necessary Supremacy of the Son of God, considered. In six Sermons; preached on several Occasions. By *Samuel Johnson*, M. A. Vicar of *Great Torrington*, Rector of *Little Torrington*.

Dr *Comber's* short Discourses upon the whole Common-Prayer, designed to inform the Judgment, and excite the Devotion of such as daily use the same. The Fourth Edition.

The Christian Religion, as professed by a Daughter of the Church of *England*. By the Author of the Proposals to the Ladies.

The Church Catechism explained, for the Use of the Diocese of *St Asaph*. By the Right Reverend Father in God *Will. Beveridge*, D. D. late Bishop of *St Asaph*. The Seventh Edition.

The Book of Psalms made fit for the Closet; with Collects and Prayers out of the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, &c. particularly adapted, with Titles to each Psalm.

Charity of Temper and Assistance. Two Sermons preached at *Great Yarmouth*. By *Tho. Macro*, D. D.

The Melody of the Heart. A Sermon preached at the opening of an Organ at *Great Yarmouth*. By *Tho. Macro*, D. D.

The Harmony between Natural and Revealed Religion asserted: In a Sermon, preached before the Worshipful the Masters, Wardens, and Company of Apothecaries, in *London*. By *T. Curteis*, Rector of *Wrotham* in *Kent*.